

Book review by Catriona McKinnon, University of Reading (until 1 August), then University of Exeter (after 1 August)

Climate Justice: Integrating Economics and Philosophy edited by Ravi Kanbur and Henry Shue, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi + 260; index. £30.00 (hardback). ISBN 978 0 19 881324 8

Economics and Philosophy are often uneasy bedfellows. The worsening climate crisis has made the gulf between them even more visible. At the heart of this divide are fundamentally different conceptions of value (thus, what is at stake in the climate crisis) and feasibility (thus, the climate policy options available to us). The increasing clamor for climate justice is rightly putting mainstream economic approaches to climate policymaking under the microscope. But there is nothing to be gained from thinking about this opposition as a knockout competition when the clock is running down on climate change. What we need, as a bare minimum, is for the dominant economic approaches to climate policymaking to become more ethically enlightened. These approaches must avoid egregious unsupported assumptions delivering short-termist climate policy that fails any test of climate justice. The book's editors have themselves been leading on this front for decades. They have brought together a fantastic group of contributors: philosophers and economists dismantling objectionable assumptions and opening up space for new approaches to climate policymaking that bring it closer to climate justice. The book also contains novel and important concrete suggestions as to how that space can be filled. While all the chapters are new and seriously interesting, for me the most thought provoking are the following.

In their Chapter 'Poor People on the Front Line', Rozenburg and Hallegatte develop a method for thinking about the impacts of climate change on poor people rather than, as is standard in climate scenario-building, poor states. Looking out to 2030 they conclude that although climate change is not a primary driver of poverty, a failure to drive development now that is 'rapid, inclusive, and climate-informed' (p. 38) will magnify global poverty later, making it much harder to reduce. Recent debates in the philosophical literature have focused on whether the justice questions raised by climate impacts can, and should, be

considered in isolation from broader justice questions raised by global poverty. This chapter is essential reading for anyone who cares about this question.

Julie Nelson's contribution 'Climate Change and Economic Self-Interest' (Chapter 6) blasts apart the strategy of argument for effective climate policies driven by economic self-interest. She argues that these strategies fail on their own terms and have been shown to be false by research in the social sciences. Taking aim at Posner and Weisbach (*Climate Change Justice* 2010), she pulls no punches. Their morally horrible suggestion that justice requires side payments to be made by poor countries to rich countries in order to incentivise participation in a global climate agreement ultimately relies on an ethical 'deus ex machina', viz. the duty to cooperate on terms agreed. Furthermore, the weight of evidence from the social sciences shows that people are motivated by a rich variety of commitments – loyalty, identity, sanctity – that have nothing to do with economic self-interest. This chapter is required reading for anyone who still believes that Homo economicus is the right model for structuring incentives to deliver just climate policies.

Chapter 11 – 'The Controllability Precautionary Principle' by Eugen Pissarskoi – finds something new and important to say about precautionary approaches to climate policy. This is no mean feat given the large and sometimes eyes-glazing-over literature on this topic. His view is that the controllability of processes that could be set in motion by different climate policies should make a difference to the climate policy we choose for precautionary reasons. His argument that existing precautionary approaches fail to guide the choice between policies aiming at a greenhouse gas concentration reduction of 280ppm and 550ppm is convincing. He argues that the controllability of climate change under a 280ppm scenario is greater than under a 550ppm scenario because the latter is more likely to open up a Pandora's box of climate tipping points, and thus a Controllability Precautionary Principle favours the 280ppm policy. Pissarskoi is right that this has been overlooked in the precautionary literature. In future work I will adjust the way I use precautionary approaches to take account of his arguments.

Finally, John Nolt's chapter (Chapter 13) – 'Long-Term Climate Justice' – starts with an energising attack on arguments that point away from a duty to deliver climate justice to

people in the far future, i.e. centuries or millennia away. He dispatches the non-identity problem with the insight that a climate policy can both harm people by 'afflicting them with injury, sickness, homelessness, or death' (p. 236) and make them better off overall – that is, in aggregate – insofar as the policy is a necessary condition of their existence. Nolt offers a pretty radical alternative to existing approaches (drawing on distributional and human rights perspectives) to our duties to people in the very distant future. He invokes relativity theory to frame this question of justice: '[o]n the most straightforward understanding of relativity, future people exist in the same way we do, though in regions of space-time from which no signal can reach us' (p. 238). This is an audacious and striking thought.

The other nine chapters in the book are similarly compelling and original. We need much more of this type of thinking.